

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /056 W

-----241416 027820 /47

R 241322Z FEB 77

FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 8738

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, IS, JO

SUBJ: JORDANIAN REFUSAL TO PERMIT ENTRY OF SAMARITANS

1. REPRESENTATIVES OF HIGH PRIEST OF SAMARITANS CALLED AT CONGEN FEB 24 TO INFORM US OF REFUSAL BY JORDANIAN AUTHORITIES TO ALLOW HIGH PRIEST AND OTHER MEMBERS OF SAMARITAN SECT TO ENTER JORDAN TO PRESENT CONDOLENCES TO KING HUSSEIN ON DEATH OF HIS WIFE. SPOKESMAN FOR GROUP, PRIEST ELAZER SADAGA, EXPLAINED THAT GROUP HAD INTENDED TO GO TO AMMAN FEBRUARY 23, BUT WAS INFORMED BY FEB 22 DURING COURSE OF DISCUSSION WITH GOJ BORDER CROSSING OFFICIALS THAT GROUP WOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO ENTER. ACCORDING TO SADAGA, GOJ OFFICIALS GAVE NO REASON FOR TURN DOWN. (EARLIER SAMARITANS HAD OBTAINED ISRAELI PERMISSION TO GO TO JORDAN.)

2. SAMARITAN SECT IS SMALL (ABOUT 400) COMMUNITY CENTERED NEAR NABLUS, WHICH CLAIMS TO BE DESCENDED FROM NORTHERN TRIBES OF ISRAEL. ALTHOUGH ITS FORM OF WORSHIP IS SIMILAR IN MANY RESPECTS TO ANCIENT JUDAISM, ITS MEMBERS ARE ARAB AND REPRESENTATIVES WISHING TO CROSS TO JORDAN ALL CARRY JORDANIAN PASSPORTS.

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3. SADAGA CLAIMS THAT MOST SAMARITANS ARE STRONGLY PRO-HASHEMITE AND THAT IN PRE-1967 DAYS KING HUSSEIN WAS ALWAYS SOLICITOUS OF SAMARITAN COMMUNITY INTERESTS. HE STATED THAT ALTHOUGH NO SAMARITAN LEADERS HAD BEEN TO JORDAN SINCE 1967, THIS WAS BECAUSE THERE HAD BEEN NO REASON FOR SUCH A VISIT. REFUSAL BY GOJ TO ALLOW THEM TO ENTER HAS CASUED GREAT CONERN IN SAMARITAN COMMUNITY ACCORDING TO SABAGA AND

THREATENS GROUP WITH ISOLATION IN EVENT OF RETURN OF WEST BANK TO ARAB CONTROL.

4. IN RESPONSE TO GROUP'S REQUEST FOR US INTERVENTION WITH GOJ, CONGEN OFFICERS PROMISED TO INFORM AMEMBASSY AMMAN OF SAMARITAN APPROACH BUT DID NOT INDICATE THAT ANY ACTION COULD BE POSSIBLE BY US. WE SUGGESTED THAT GROUP SHOULD PURSUE MATTER WITH MEMBERS OF JORDANIAN PALIAMENT FROM NABLUS AREA AS WELL AS WITH ANY OTHER APPROPRIATE JORDANIAN CONTACTS. ONE OF GROUP, ABDUL HACK, A BUSINESSMAN FROM NABLUS, STATED THAT HE WOULD BE GOING, EVENING OF FEB 24, TO SEE HIKMAT AL MASRI, WHO CURRENTLY IN AMMAN, AND SEEK HIS HELP WITH KING TO ALLOW GROUP TO ENTER.

5. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH IT WOULD APPEAR THIS MATTER NOT NECES- SARILY US BUSINESS, CONGEN WOULD BE INTERESTED IN ANY INFORMATION WHICH EMBASSY AMMAN MAY PICK UP REGARDING THIS REPORTED JORDANIAN REFUSAL TO ALLOW SAMARITANS TO ENTER. AS NOTED IN JERUSALEM 268 SUCH A TURN DOWN SEEMS OUT OF LINE WITH KING'S USUAL ATTITUDE TOWARDS MINORITY GROUPS. NEWLIN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: RELIGIOUS LEADERS, MINORITIES, TRAVEL CONTROLS, CONDOLENCE MESSAGES
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Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977JERUSA00279
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770064-0472
Format: TEL
From: JERUSALEM
Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Litigation History:
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Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
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Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3243574
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: JORDANIAN REFUSAL TO PERMIT ENTRY OF SAMARITANS
TAGS: PFOR, IS, JO, (HUSSEIN I), (ALIA, QUEEN)
To: AMMAN
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/ee6dc1bf-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009